

Message Text

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ACTION AID-31

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SUBJ: PROJECT MANAGEMENT, OPERATIONS AND MONITORING

AIDAC

REF: (A) STATE 148676

(B) AIDTO CIRC A-154 (C) STATE 138582

1. FOLLOWING ARE MISSION'S COMMENTS ON SUBJECT AREA POSED
REF B, PAGE 6. REGRET DELAY IN RESPONSE.

2. MISSION ENDORSES GENERAL MAXIM THAT AID NOT RPT NOT ATTEMPT
IMPOSE ONE ORGANIZATIONAL MODEL FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES
WORLD-WIDE. MODEL PROPOSED REF B, WHICH EMPHASIZES AID'S
DISENGAGEMENT FROM DIRECT INVOLVEMENT PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION,
WOULD APPEAR TO BE APPROPRIATE FOR ONLY A VERY FEW COUNTRIES IN
HIGHEST TIER OF 10 TO 15 DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. IN COLLECTIVE
EXPERIENCE OFFICERS THIS USAID, SUCH A MODEL WOULD BE UNWORK-
ABLE IN AFGHANISTAN AND IN MANY OTHER LDCS AT SIMILAR LEVEL
OF DEVELOPMENT. IT WOULD ALSO APPEAR THAT SUCH A MODEL
IS, IN GENERAL,

INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE INTENT OF THE 1973 F.A.A. REQUIRING AID TO
ACCOMPLISH THE MOST DIFFICULT TASK OF DESIGNING PROJECTS TO
ACTUALLY REACH THE POOREST MAJORITY. SIMILARLY THE AID STAND-
OFFISHNESS IMPLIED IN REF B WHEREIN AID OFFICERS OBSERVE AND
MONITOR FROM AFAR IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE PBAR PROJECT PERFOR-
MANCE TRACKING

SYSTEM WHEREIN THE FOCUS IS ON PERFORMING TO MEET PLANNED
TARGETS AND, IF UNSUCCESSFUL, TO IMMEDIATELY FORCE DECISIONS,
ADJUST THE PROJECT DESIGN OR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TO AFFECT A
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CORRECTION. PPT REQUIRES DIRECT ACTION ON THE PART OF AID TO

PRODUCE RESULTS.

3. MORE SPECIFICALLY, MISSION HAD THOUGHT THAT REF C WHICH REPORTED ON THE DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR'S DETERMINATION THAT AID USE AVAILABLE DIRECT-HIRE PERSONNEL IN THE PLACE OF PASA AND CONTRACT INTERMEDIARIES HAD EFFECTIVELY OVER TAKEN REF B, PAGE 2 QUOTE...THE VIRTUAL ELIMINATION OF THE DIRECT HIRE TECHNICIAN-IMPLEMENTER THROUGH THE USE OF INTERMEDIARIES (PRIVATE CONTRACTORS AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES) WILL LARGELY END THE NEED FOR THE KIND OF MANAGEMENT IN THE OLDER SENSE WHERE A PRINCIPAL DUTY OF MISSION STAFF OFTEN WAS THE SUPERVISION OF DIRECT HIRE EMPLOYEES. AID IS MOVING INCREASINGLY TOWARDS ARRANGEMENTS WHERE, AFTER AID AND THE HOST COUNTRY HAVE REACHED AGREEMENT ON PROJECT DESIGN, A PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN CAN BE PREPARED AND CARRIED OUT BY THE HOST COUNTRY INSTITUTION AND INTERMEDIARY UNQUOTE. EVEN WITHOUT THE AID PERSONNEL CRISIS GENERATED BY EVENTS IN SOUTH EAST ASIA MANY (BUT NOT ALL) USAID STAFF BELIEVED THAT DIRECT-HIRE IMPLEMENTERS ARE SUPERIOR TO INTERMEDIARIES FOR THE MAIN REASON THAT THEY ARE MORE RESPONSIVE, AS A CLASS, TO AID AND MISSION POLICIES, PROGRAM THRUSTS, AND TO RAPID CHANGE. INTERMEDIARIES HAVE, BY DEFINITION, OTHER INTERESTS AND NEEDS WHICH ARE NOT ALWAYS IN HARMONY WITH AID INTERESTS.

4. THE QUOTE ILLUSTRATIVE TABLE-PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ROLES UNQUOTE, ATTACHMENT A, STRIKES SOME (BUT NOT ALL) USAID OFFICERS AS UNREALISTIC. WHILE IT IS DIFFICULT TO GENERALIZE OR CHARACTERIZE IDEAL TYPES, THE EXPERIENCE OF SEVERAL OFFICERS IN MISSION HAS BEEN THAT PROGRAM PERSONNEL GENERALLY HAVE DONE MOST IF NOT ALL FUNCTIONS DESCRIBED AS PRIMARY ROLE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER UNDER THE PROJECT PLANNING RUBRIC. MAIN OBVIOUS REASON IS THAT PROGRAM PERSONNEL IN FIELD HAVE MORE HIGHLY DEVELOPED ABILITY TO WRITE THE PROSE AND TO ARTICULATE DESIGN CONCEPTS IN PLANNING PAPERS DESIRED BY AID/W REVIEWERS WHO ARE, IN THE MAIN, PROGRAM TYPES. (NOTE: IF PROGRAM PERSONNEL WERE CONVERTED TO DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS THIS COMMUNICATIONS DIFFICULTY MIGHT BE OVERCOME BUT IT SEEMS LESS LIKELY THAT TRANSFORMED TECHNICIANS COULD DO THE SAME.) SIMILARLY THE DUTIES DESCRIBED AS SECONDARY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER UNDER THE QUOTE PROJECT OPERATIONS UNQUOTE RUBRIC ARE THE ONES, IN UNCLASSIFIED

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THIS MISSION'S EXPERIENCE, WHICH DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS SPEND MOST OF THEIR TIME DOING.

5. IF THIS MISSION'S PERCEPTIONS ACCURATELY RECORD REALITY ONE CONCLUSION MIGHT BE THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER'S DUTIES AS SHOWN REF B, ATTACHMENT A, ARE INFLATED ONE NOTCH THROUGHOUT (I.E., WHEREVER ATTACHMENT A READS SECONDARY, PRIMARY SHOULD BE SUBSTITUTED THEREFORE). COROLLARY IS THAT THE PROJECT OPER-

ATIONS OFFICER DUTIES, IF DEFLATED CONCOMITANTLY, ARE REDUCED
TO NEAR ZERO. MISSION WOULD SUGGEST, THEREFORE, THAT CONCEPT
OF PROJECT OPERATIONS OFFICER BE SUPPLANTED WITH FLEXIBLE NOTION
THAT EQUAL NUMBER OF SLOTS COULD BE ALLOCATED FOR DIRECT-HIRE
IMPLEMENTER-DOERS, I.E., PEOPLE
DIRECTLY UNDER USAID SUPERVISION WHO WOULD INTERACT WITH
HOST COUNTRY COUNTERPARTS TO GET THE JOB DONE.
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